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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, today give our Senators the second wind of Your passion, power, and perseverance. Fill them with the assurance of Your presence. May they seek to live with the knowledge that You have chosen them to serve You and country. Protect their thoughts and actions from temptation as You control all they say and do by the power of Your spirit. May their lives bring glory to Your Name. Lord, remind them that they pass through this life but once, so that they must not take this day for granted but live to honor You.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

SCHEDULE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Mr. President, under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 1:30 p.m. for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the majority leader is going to yield the floor to me at this moment.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

CONGRATULATING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the State of Nevada was admitted to the Union in 1864. Since 1864 there have been 25 Senators in its 148-year history. Today HARRY MASON REID becomes the longest serving Member of Congress in the history of the State of Nevada.

Senator REID was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives the same year I was elected, 1982, and became a Member of the House in 1983. He became a Member of the Senate in 1987. He has served with great distinction in both Houses of Congress, serving his State of Nevada, and today is the highest ranking Democrat in the Senate, serving as its majority leader.

I daresay, Mr. President, that you and I would probably not really know anything about the town of Searchlight, NV, were it not for HARRY REID. HARRY REID has told us so many stories of his youth and his background in that tiny town and what brought him to this station in life today. I almost feel that if there were a town or high school reunion, I could attend it with HARRY and look around and recognize a lot of people there because I have certainly heard a lot of stories about his youth and the people who have had a dramatic impact on his life from the time he was growing up in Searchlight, NV.

We know he came from modest circumstances. His family raised him in a very small home without indoor plumbing. He attended a two-room elementary school in Searchlight, NV. As a child, Senator REID's father was a hard rock miner and his mother took in laundry. He says of his parents that

his father gave him quiet and his mother gave him confidence.

Opportunities were scarce in Searchlight, but HARRY made the most of what he had. His book "The Good Fight" has a great opening paragraph that I would like to share with everyone because it says so much about what life must have been like in the town of Searchlight.

HARRY wrote in his book:

I come from a mining town. But by the time I came along—December 22, 1939—the leading industry in my hometown of Searchlight, NV, was no longer mining, it was prostitution. I don't exaggerate. There was a local law that said you could not have a house of prostitution or a place that served alcohol within so many feet of a school. Once, when it was determined that one of the clubs was in violation of the law, they moved the school.

It says a lot about Searchlight. It also says a lot about the circumstances he faced growing up. He made the most of what he had.

Between hitchhiking more than 40 miles and staying with extended relatives, HARRY was able to attend Basic High School, the nearest high school to Searchlight. While at Basic High in Henderson, he met two people who dramatically changed his life—Landra Gould, who would become his wife of 53 years and counting, and Mike O'Callaghan, who was a coach, a teacher, a mentor, and a friend. HARRY REID said of Mike O'Callaghan that he was the toughest man he ever met.

HARRY REID played high school baseball with Rey Martinez, who would become his chief of staff, and Donnie Wilson, who would also go to work for REID in Washington.

I once invited "Mr. Cub," Ernie Banks, to my office, and I invited HARRY REID—a former baseball player in his youth—to come up and meet Ernie Banks.

Ernie Banks looked in his eye and said: What position did you play, HARRY?

HARRY said: I played catcher.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Ernie Banks said: I don't believe it. Get in the position.

At that point, I heard the bones creaking as HARRY went down in the catcher's crouch in my office in front of Ernie Banks, and we all cheered.

He won his first election in high school when he ran for junior class treasurer. Of course he would win because Landra, his wife-to-be, wrote his speech and got him elected. Rey Martinez managed his campaign when he became the senior class president.

He also ran into the fellow I mentioned earlier, Mike O'Callaghan, who had such a profound impact on his personal and political life. Behind HARRY'S desk, he has a picture of his friend and mentor Governor O'Callaghan.

HARRY REID also took up boxing after he was inspired by Mike O'Callaghan—as I said, the toughest man he ever met, in HARRY'S memory.

In his book "The Good Fight," HARRY said:

There are sluggers, and then there are boxers. I became a pretty good boxer. I could assess situations well, and I learned to recognize and exploit an opposing fighter's weaknesses. I could hit hard, and I could take a punch.

Mr. President, you and I know that is a perfect background for the business we are in today.

With scholarship money Mike O'Callaghan had helped put together for him, HARRY REID left for the College of Southern Utah in Cedar City. He hated being so far away from Landra, so he moved back to Henderson for the summer.

Despite the best efforts of Landra's father to discourage him, HARRY married Landra. They eloped in September of 1959. The newly married couple moved to Logan, UT, where he would finish college while renting from a loving Mormon family, Matthew and Louise Bird. HARRY REID and Landra decided to join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints based on this wonderful family who served as their landlords. He told me many times that he didn't come from a religious family. In his book, he said that the only family religion he remembered was their devotion and love for Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his house.

Mike O'Callaghan left teaching high school for Democratic politics at that point, and he urged HARRY to move to Washington, DC, to attend law school. HARRY REID put himself through law school by working nights as a U.S. Capitol police officer. In his book are pictures of HARRY in uniform as a Capitol police officer—a job that O'Callaghan had helped line up for him—when he was a law student.

He returned to Nevada after law school and served as Henderson city attorney before being elected to the Nevada Assembly in 1968.

In 1970, at age 30, HARRY REID ran for Lieutenant Governor of Nevada, with his friend and mentor Mike O'Callaghan running for Governor. They won the race, and HARRY REID

served as Lieutenant Governor from 1971 until 1974, becoming a friend to my mentor Paul Simon, who was then Lieutenant Governor of Illinois.

HARRY lost his race for the U.S. Senate in 1974 when the seat was vacated by Alan Bible, but he lost by fewer than 600 votes. Governor O'Callaghan then asked him to serve as chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission.

When Nevada's population growth led to an additional seat in Congress in 1982, HARRY REID ran for the new seat and won, and that is when I first met him. He served two terms in the House from 1983 to 1987 before running for the Senate. In 1986 REID won the Democratic nomination for the Senate seat of retiring two-term incumbent Republican Senator Paul Laxalt.

From 1999 to 2005 HARRY REID served as Senate Democratic whip, as minority whip from 1999 to 2001 and again 2003 to 2005, and then as majority whip from 2001 to 2003. During those years as whip, HARRY REID lived on the floor of the Senate. He developed a real understanding not just of the rules and procedures of the Senate but of the institution and the Members.

Mike O'Callaghan died of a heart attack while attending daily Catholic mass in 2004, so he didn't live to see his good friend elected as minority leader in 2005 or, obviously, as majority leader in the Senate. But I know that every single day HARRY serves in public life, Mike O'Callaghan is in his heart.

I listened this morning to some of the analysts about what just happened with this historic vote yesterday in the Senate. Some of them this morning, who know a little bit about what really happens here, were diminishing the role played by HARRY REID. I can tell everyone that on the day leading up to the vote, the last day, December 31, I spent the better part of 16 hours in HARRY'S office as the negotiations went back and forth. There were three parties to that negotiation: Senator MCCONNELL, the President of the United States, and HARRY REID. There was not a minute that passed that e-mails were not transferred back and forth to put together the coalition that passed this historic measure and avoided the economic disaster that otherwise would have occurred. It was not the first time I have seen HARRY in that position—behind closed doors, without a lot of fanfare, playing a critical role in the passage of legislation that really makes a difference for the average working families of America.

A few years ago I worked with him as he led the effort to pass the Health Care Reform Act, a measure on which I believe he shares my thinking—it is one of the most important pieces of legislation we have ever worked on in our lives. It never, ever would have become law if it were not for his skill, determination, and the trust the Democratic majority had in their leader, HARRY REID.

This is a day, of course, in Nevada history as much as American history

as HARRY becomes the longest serving Congressman and Senator in the State of Nevada.

I recall one particular visit to his office. I dropped in frequently there to see what was going on and to chat with him about the business of the Senate and life itself. When I came in, I saw a young rock group called the Killers sitting in his office. Yes, that is their name, the Killers, and they are from Nevada. HARRY told me this young group, popular as they are in other places, was especially popular in Nevada because they performed the Nevada State song, which is entitled "Home Means Nevada." When I think about this historic moment today when HARRY becomes part of the history of his State, I recall one stanza from that song. It says, "Deep in the heart of the golden west, home means Nevada to me." In all of my conversations over all the years, time and again the conversations always return to his home State of Nevada, his hometown of Searchlight, and the people he loves so much to represent in the Senate.

It has been an honor to serve with this great man. I am glad he achieved this great moment in history on behalf of Nevada and the United States.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. No one would believe this, but I did not know Senator DURBIN was going to say a word. Most of what he said is unimportant, but I appreciate his efforts to try to make me better than what I am. I really do appreciate his friendship.

We came as a couple of anxious people to the House of Representatives 30 years ago. Speaking for both of us—and I can do that—it was such a wonderful experience. During the first 3 or 4 months I was in the House of Representatives, I kept thinking I was going to have to pay somebody because I was having such a good time. It took me a while to figure out that the taxpayers were paying me for doing a job that was so much fun.

I appreciate very much Senator DURBIN'S friendship. I so admire and appreciate him for all he has done for me, the State of Illinois, and the country. He is absolutely right about this—he had a mentor by the name of Paul Simon who had the good fortune to serve, as we were both Lieutenant Governors at or near the same time. We served in the House of Representatives together and we served in the Senate together. What a wonderful human being. Senator DURBIN and I have talked about this. Senator Simon was to DICK DURBIN what Mike O'Callaghan was to me. He was not only the toughest man I ever knew but the most honest. When he would drive, he would never, ever exceed a posted speed limit. He is somebody whom I will always remember. I could never be like him.

In addition to being tough and honest, he could swear like no one we have ever heard, but only he could do it, this massive man who had almost 200 amateur fights before going to Korea and

losing his leg. He was such an exemplary person in my life. So I appreciate Senator DURBIN mentioning him. But to me, he was like this great man Paul Simon. I don't know how many books he ended up writing. I am sure it is 15 or 20. He never went to college. He was a brilliant man. So I thank Senator DURBIN very much. I appreciate it a lot.

HELPING THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE SANDY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am stunned by what didn't happen in the House of Representatives last night. I appreciate that they, with the support of all but a handful of Democrats and just a handful of Republicans, passed something to keep us from going over the fiscal cliff, and that is admirable. NANCY PELOSI deserves such accolades for carrying more than her share of the weight over there in passing this bill. But one of the things they didn't do last night—I wish to read into the RECORD a letter, an e-mail, from a person by the name of Barrie Kolstein, K-O-L-S-T-E-I-N:

Owner of perhaps the oldest and one of the most recognized violinmaking shops in the United States, located in Baldwin, New York.

Shop was severely damaged by recent hurricane Sandy. Owned buildings and occupied them for over 32 years without any problems at all.

This storm compromised my building inside and outside, with facilities within the building backing up, pipe breakage and roof damage, plus the horrid conditions that literally assaulted all the buildings in my immediate area.

Storm decimated my building as well as the neighboring buildings that perhaps was one of the more stable and viable business areas of Baldwin.

My shop has been closed since the storm.

We are doing our best to afford the restoration of the building and repair the numerous fine old pedigree string instruments (violins, violas, cellos and basses) that were so horribly damaged.

We lost machinery, tools, supplies and most of our filed records.

This is a true nightmare, that at the age of 63, I never thought I would be faced with.

There are tens of thousands of people in New York, tens of thousands of people in New Jersey, and other parts of the Northeast who have had their lives turned upside down. I am dismayed and saddened that the House of Representatives walked away last night—didn't even touch this—after we spent so much time here on the floor doing something to help a beleaguered part of our country. I was happy to help with Katrina. I was happy to help with the violent storm that hit Joplin, MO. We all were. We moved in quickly.

It has been months now and these people are still suffering. Governor Cuomo and Governor Christie have done their best with the limited resources that are available when a disaster such as this occurs. This is known in the law as an act of God. No one knew it was coming. No one had

any idea this terrible storm would do the damage it did. It was the perfect storm because we had different elements working against each other to create this terrible situation.

So, I repeat, I am dismayed and saddened the House of Representatives adjourned last night without addressing the pressing needs of these people. There are still hundreds of thousands of people who don't have a place to live, whose homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, as I have indicated from Mr. Kolstein, by this terrible disaster. It is heartbreaking to leave these victims of Sandy stranded and waiting for help.

This storm damaged or destroyed more than 700,000 homes in New York and New Jersey and New England. We have the power to help our countrymen put their lives back together. We did it here in the Senate. We sent it to the House of Representatives, but they walked away, just as they did with postal reform and just as they did with agricultural reform, our farm bill, and just as they have walked away from so many different things this year. They left these people without help. They are gone; they have left; they are not in Washington. I am disappointed we have turned our backs—and I don't include myself in this operation, or anyone in this Senate; we worked on a bipartisan basis to get this done, but I am deeply disappointed the House of Representatives has turned their backs on people who are suffering.

Please understand, everybody, this does not include the leadership of Leader PELOSI or Leader HOYER. They have done their best to gather their troops to help at any time for anything that is needed.

To walk away from these people is not who we should be as Americans. Wintertime is now here. When disaster strikes, be it fire, flood, storm, or earthquake, we in the past haven't paused and we don't delay, but we have here. As Americans, we respond with haste at a national level when American lives are at stake and American communities are shattered. It is no wonder how people feel about Congress: They just left town.

They need to do better over there. We should have a postal reform bill. We should have a farm bill. The farm bill, by the way, saves \$24 billion—not million but billion. DEBBIE STABENOW, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, worked so hard to get this done. We had a bipartisan bill that passed the Senate overwhelmingly. Why did the House of Representatives drop it? Well, they dropped it because the same porkbarrel programs that help people who don't need help in that farm program were taken out of the bill. So now we are on a short-term extension. The benefits these people don't deserve they are still getting.

They need to do better over there. Compromise is hard; we know that. Sometimes compromise doesn't happen when we want it. Compromise some-

times doesn't satisfy either side. But as I have said here and other places, when I practiced law, we had the concept it was a good settlement when both sides walked out unhappy, having reached a settlement, and that is what we did here the night before last. Actually, it was yesterday, because it was well after midnight. It was a piece of legislation we weren't all elated about, but it moved the ball forward.

We have so many more hard decisions to make in the year ahead. So unlike others behind us in this Capitol, I am not going to stoop to name-calling; I just want people to work and do what they need to do. Let the House of Representatives work its will. Let Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives debate. They have an easier time of it because they can set rules on how to debate. They have the Rules Committee where they can set how long they debate and on what subjects, but let the body work its will, which hasn't happened.

It is a sad day when we turn our backs on millions of our fellow Americans during their time of greatest need, and that certainly is what has happened here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know the distinguished majority leader is about to propound a unanimous consent request. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the majority leader is not a person to praise himself, but I will.

I totally agree with the comments he made about how the session has virtually ended.

It is only in recent times that I find myself presiding as often as I have because of other circumstances, and I am glad I was here to open the Senate today to hear the distinguished senior Senator from Illinois speak about the distinguished senior Senator from Nevada. We first met when he was running for the Senate seat at a campaign event in another State. We worked together at that time and became friends, and from that day on we have actually spoken many times with our wives about that meeting in Florida.

I consider it a privilege that I was on the floor today to hear the words of the Senator from Illinois and I join in praising my friend from Nevada. He is a dear and wonderful friend. His wife and my wife are dear wonderful friends. We both married way above ourselves. But I feel privileged to serve every day with the Senator from Nevada.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate very much the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the President pro tempore of the Senate saying those